



#ساندوا السودان  
#StandWithSudan

## Sudan Media Forum Weekly Briefing

Issue [27] | March 9, 2026

A curated weekly update on the most significant news from Sudan.

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Hello ,

Welcome to your weekly briefing. This week's briefing highlights escalating fighting across Kordofan, including the Sudanese army's recapture of the strategic city of Bara amid continued drone and artillery attacks on civilians. The update also covers growing humanitarian distress in Khartoum as Ramadan hunger spreads and charity kitchens shut down. Reports warn of rising health threats, including dengue outbreaks, and the emergence of Sudan as a hub for synthetic drug production. Meanwhile, international developments—from UK visa restrictions to regional geopolitical tensions—signal mounting economic and diplomatic pressures on Sudan.

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### □ Top Story of the Week

#### Sudan War Escalates Across Kordofan as Army Recaptures Strategic City of Bara Amid Drone and Artillery Strikes on Civilians



Fighting intensified across Sudan's Kordofan region last week as the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement–North (SPLM-N) stepped up shelling of the cities of Kadugli and Dilling in South Kordofan. Meanwhile, the Sudanese army and allied forces announced on Thursday that they had regained control of the strategic city of Bara in North Kordofan.

The RSF also launched drone attacks on the cities of Kosti and Rabak in White Nile State, as well as El-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan, targeting a number of civilian and military sites. In response, [army drones struck](#) the town of Al-Mujlad in West Kordofan, which is under RSF control. The RSF said the Sudanese army carried out a drone strike on Wednesday morning targeting the market in Al-Mujlad, killing and wounding dozens of unarmed civilians. In the city of [Dilling in South Kordofan](#),

aerial and artillery bombardment killed at least nine people and injured more than 50 others, according to doctors. The Sudan Doctors Network said the attacks left dozens dead and destroyed key service facilities in the city.

Separately, five people were killed and 33 others wounded in artillery shelling that hit residential neighborhoods in [Kadugli, South Kordofan](#). The Sudanese army said in a statement that its forces had seized [control of Bara](#), north of El-Obeid, following heavy fighting with RSF troops. RSF forces had controlled the city since October last year, during which widespread violations amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity were reported by international organizations and human rights groups.

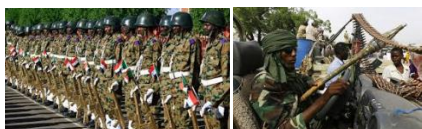
On Friday, the Sudan Doctors Network accused the RSF of killing seven civilians—including two women and a child—during an attack on Thursday on the area of Um Kreidim, west of Bara in North Kordofan.

According to [the statement](#), the assault involved burning large parts of the area and looting the local market entirely. The region's only health center was set ablaze and the pharmacy looted, leaving widespread destruction that has further compounded residents' suffering during the month of Ramadan. Since the beginning of last week, Dilling has been under intense aerial and artillery bombardment, as RSF and SPLM-N forces attempt to reimpose a siege on the main cities of South Kordofan. The army and its allies had managed in January and February to break the siege on Dilling and Kadugli.

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## 🇸🇩 Political & Security Update

### Sudan Army Plans to Integrate Allied Fighters into Military Ranks



Sudan's Sovereign Council member and Assistant Commander-in-Chief of [the Armed Forces](#), Yasser Al-Atta, announced that the army intends to activate mechanisms to regulate and integrate allied fighters supporting it into the military establishment, in a move aimed at formalizing their status within the country's regular forces. Since the outbreak of war with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in April 2023, the Sudanese Armed Forces have relied on thousands of fighters from the Joint Forces affiliated with armed movements. The army has also been backed by the Sudan Shield Forces, whose members largely come from communities in central Sudan and the Butana plains.

In addition, battalions linked to the Islamist movement have fought alongside the army, along with dozens of civilians who responded to calls for popular mobilization and joined the fighting against the RSF. Speaking to a military gathering in Omdurman, Al-Atta said the army would soon activate a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) mechanism. "Those who wish to join the army according to the established criteria will be able to do so, and those who prefer to join the security services or the police are also welcome," he said. He added that individuals unwilling to integrate into the military institution would be supported by the state and the armed forces through rehabilitation programs in vocational and professional training centers.

### Drone Strike in East Darfur Kills at Least Six Civilians



at least [six people were killed](#) and several others injured when a drone, believed to be operated by the Sudanese army, struck a fuel market and storage facilities in Al-Duwayn, East Darfur, according to local sources. Sources told Sudan Tribune that “around six civilians were killed and more than 12 injured, while the airstrike triggered fires and massive explosions, causing widespread panic among residents.” They added that the market, controlled by Rapid Support Forces (RSF) elements and allied traders, was completely destroyed.

Since the early months of the war, East Darfur has been under the control of the RSF, which established a civilian administration to provide basic services. The attack comes as part of the army’s strategy to target fuel supplies smuggled from South Sudan and Libya to RSF forces operating across Darfur and Kordofan.

### **UN Warns of Escalating Violence in Kordofan as Civilians and Hospitals Come Under Attack**



The United Nations has warned of a worrying escalation of violence in the Kordofan region, saying the fighting continues to inflict heavy losses on civilians and local communities. Speaking at the UN’s daily press briefing, [Stéphane Dujarric](#), spokesperson for United Nations, said the intense clashes in the region have resulted in civilian deaths and injuries, as well as the destruction of homes, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure. He added that humanitarian access is becoming increasingly restricted. Dujarric said that in South Kordofan, fighting between the Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces has intensified in recent days, further exposing civilians to danger.

Local humanitarian organizations have also reported disruptions along major roads leading to the city of Al-Dilling, complicating the delivery of aid. According to humanitarian partners, a drone strike last week targeted Al-Dilling General Hospital, killing at least four patients and injuring several civilians. The UN spokesperson said violence has also escalated in the city of Kadugli, creating a highly volatile security environment for local communities and humanitarian workers.

In North Kordofan, the city of El-Obeid has been subjected to continuous drone attacks for five consecutive days since the beginning of March, with reports indicating that a hospital and several government sites were targeted. Dujarric added that the attacks come amid growing threats to critical infrastructure and supply routes, including the road linking Kosti and El-Obeid, raising serious concerns over the disruption of vital humanitarian and commercial supply chains.

### **First Flight Returns 107 Sudanese Refugees from Cairo to Port Sudan**



A plane carrying 107 [Sudanese refugees](#), including a group recently released from Egyptian prisons, departed Cairo International Airport on Sunday en route to Port Sudan, according to Mohamed Wada’a, head of the Committee for Voluntary Return of

Sudanese Nationals from Egypt. The first flight included men, women, children, and elderly passengers, some of whom had been detained during recent security campaigns targeting refugees and foreign nationals. Wada'a confirmed that repatriation flights will continue and announced plans to launch an online platform to respond to inquiries. He also praised business sponsors who financed the first flight and pledged support for upcoming trips.

Sudan's Prime Minister, Kamel Idris, who concluded a visit to Cairo on Friday, February 27, 2026, confirmed that Sudan and Egypt agreed to establish a joint committee to facilitate the release of detainees held for residency violations. Meanwhile, the Egyptian Network for Human Rights reported the deteriorating health of Sudanese refugee Mudathir Suleiman Saleh, 26, detained at Abbour Police Station in Cairo. Mudathir suffers from a brain condition and requires urgent medical care. He holds an official "Asylum Request" document issued by the UN Refugee Agency in December 2025.

### Report Warns Sudan Emerging as Hub for Captagon Production Amid War



A new report by the [Transparency and Policy Observatory](#) in Sudan has revealed a dangerous shift in the map of illicit activities, warning that Sudan is becoming an emerging hub for the production and trafficking of synthetic drugs, particularly Captagon and substances similar to Methamphetamine. The report highlights alarming indicators of the expansion of this industry inside Sudan. Authorities have seized three Captagon production laboratories within the country, while production capacity has surged from 7,200 pills per hour in 2023 to around 100,000 pills per hour in some factories by 2025. In addition, about half a ton of narcotics was seized in the Red Sea State in January 2026.

Titled "Drugs in Sudan in Times of War: An Illicit Economy Fueling Conflict," the report states that Sudan has shifted from being merely a transit corridor for drug trafficking to a major manufacturing platform since the outbreak of war in April 2023, taking advantage of weak government oversight and fragmented authority. According to the report, the activity has evolved beyond small-scale smuggling operations into semi-industrial large-scale production. The report also notes that such substances are reportedly used among fighters to increase alertness and reduce feelings of hunger and fatigue during combat. It further points out that the Red Sea region has become a strategic hub for maritime smuggling routes toward Gulf markets, indicating the involvement of international networks that have exploited the security vacuum to establish this destructive industry inside Sudan. Experts at the observatory warned that the spread of drug production is exacerbating security challenges and corruption, posing an additional threat to the country amid the ongoing conflict.

### Dengue Fever Cases Surge in Northern Sudan Amid Medicine Shortages



The preparatory committee of the [Sudan Doctors' Union](#) has revealed that more than 600 cases of dengue fever have been recorded in Northern State, raising fears of a wider outbreak amid severe shortages of medicines. Adiba Ibrahim, an internal medicine and epidemiology specialist and a member of the committee, said 679 dengue fever cases had recently been recorded in the localities of Merowe and Al-Dabbah, including four deaths. She explained that Merowe locality registered 159 cases, while

around 250 cases were reported in displacement camps in Al-Dabbah locality, noting that the four fatalities were among these cases. Ibrahim said Sudan's health situation is witnessing increasing deterioration, with rising malaria infections reported across most states that are already suffering from weak health services and severe shortages of medicines—particularly life-saving drugs. She also confirmed that these outbreaks have spread to other states, including White Nile State, where about 1,000 malaria cases have been recorded, in addition to 125 dengue fever cases, posing significant challenges to the country's already strained health system.

### UK Halts Student Visas for Sudanese and Three Other Nationalities



The [British government](#) has decided to suspend the issuance of student visas with immediate effect for citizens of four countries, including Sudan, Afghanistan, Cameroon, and Myanmar. In a statement, the UK Home Office said an “emergency pause” had been imposed for the first time on visa applications from nationals of the four “high-risk” countries following a sharp rise in asylum claims submitted through legal entry routes. The ministry added that the measure could be extended to other nationalities if similar “systemic abuses” are identified.

Meanwhile, Universities UK International warned that the blanket suspension could damage Britain's reputation as a global study destination and may cost the higher education sector up to £350 million in lost first-year tuition fees. The Home Office clarified that skilled worker visa applications from the four countries remain open while further reviews are conducted. However, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood told members of parliament that the move was necessary after internal analysis showed a 470% increase since 2021 in asylum applications from individuals who had entered the country on legal visas.

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### ♥ Humanitarian Focus

### Ramadan Hunger Deepens in Khartoum as Charity Kitchens Shut Down



Residents of Sudan's capital, Khartoum, are facing increasingly dire conditions, with many struggling to secure a meal to break their fast during Ramadan. For many families, even preparing a basic iftar has become impossible. Most of the charity kitchens known locally as “takaya” have suspended operations across Khartoum State. Reports indicate that around 40% of these community kitchens have stopped working due to a combination of security restrictions, lack of funding, and the depletion of food supplies—threatening thousands of war-affected families with hunger.

A resident identified as M.A. told [Sudan Tribune](#) that people in the area are enduring catastrophic conditions during Ramadan, amid weak humanitarian support and the loss of income sources for most residents. Mohamed Al-Omda, a supervisor of charity kitchens in Al-Jarif East, said that although food items remain available in local markets, soaring prices have placed them beyond

the reach of ordinary citizens. “All the takyas have stopped operating due to the lack of support,” Al-Omda said, noting that the closures have created severe hardship for residents who relied on them for at least one daily meal—especially as the need for iftar meals continues to grow.

Previously, these volunteer groups ran more than 90 community kitchens providing meals to millions of displaced people and civilians trapped by fighting across Sudan. However, the recent surge in food prices has forced about 50 kitchens to shut down completely, worsening the plight of people searching for a single meal a day. Ibrahim Youssef, a humanitarian activist and volunteer with charity kitchens in Khartoum, said weak performance by the state government—combined with the federal government’s focus on political matters—has further compounded the suffering of residents returning to the capital in hopes of improved conditions. He added that most “takaya” have ceased operations due to security harassment by armed groups, which has discouraged volunteers and forced them to abandon their work. Youssef said he personally faced accusations from an armed group aligned with the army of “operating without authorization.” . “I was arrested and accused of working with the Sumoud Alliance, and was released after nine days of interrogation in a house used by the group as a detention site,” he said.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has warned in recent reports that the number of people facing hunger in Sudan could reach 21 million. International organizations are grappling with a massive funding gap, with the WFP urgently requiring \$700 million by June to sustain its operations, amid growing fears that critical aid could be halted—leaving millions without access to food.

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#### □ Economic Snapshot

### Experts Warn Regional War Could Deepen Sudan’s Economic Crisis



Experts have warned that a potential escalation of a U.S.–Israeli–Iranian conflict could have [serious repercussions for Sudan](#), particularly as the country continues to grapple with its own war between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). They cautioned that prolonged regional conflict could lead to a decline in humanitarian support from Gulf countries and other international donors, alongside rising fuel prices and possible disruptions to maritime navigation in the Red Sea. The longer the confrontation between Iran, Israel, and the United States continues, the greater the risk of regional and international economic isolation if shipping lanes are disrupted.

Meanwhile, Sudan’s Ministry of Energy said in a statement that petroleum supplies remain secure, adding that coordination with partners is ongoing to ensure the steady and regular flow of fuel. The ministry also revealed arrangements to import additional fuel to guarantee stable supplies in domestic markets and prevent any potential shortages.

Economic researcher and analyst Dr. Haitham Fathi said the impact of the Iran-related conflict on Sudan could be significant and complex, depending largely on developments in the region. Fathi said the Sudanese economy would likely face direct consequences, including higher inflation driven by rising prices for goods and services. He explained that restrictions on global trade caused by war—particularly in energy markets—could push up costs, noting that the Gulf region and Iran together account for roughly a fifth of global oil production. Fathi also predicted further depreciation of the Sudanese pound due to mounting

pressure on the country's foreign currency revenues and a widening budget deficit resulting from higher energy prices. He expressed concern over potential shortages in gas imports if Qatari supplies are disrupted by instability affecting maritime navigation in the Gulf, noting that Qatar is the world's largest producer of liquefied natural gas (LNG). "No one can accurately predict the trajectory of this war," Fathi said, stressing the need for the government to examine various scenarios and implement precautionary measures to address possible developments. He added that the economic repercussions would ultimately be reflected in higher prices for goods and services. Should regional tensions persist or lead to disruptions at ports and supply chains, imports could also be affected.

In addition, airspace closures and reduced air traffic could directly affect the flow of Sudanese exports. The suspension of flights to Gulf countries and disruptions at ports have already strained supply chains and increased transportation costs. Fathi urged the government to develop additional mechanisms to mitigate the war's impact on exports and safeguard the interests of Sudanese exporters without compromising the country's strategic domestic reserves.

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## Culture & In-Depth

### Sudanese Poet Emi Mahmoud and South Sudanese Novelist Stella Gaitano Share Norway's 2025 Freedom of Expression Award



The Norwegian Writers' Union has awarded the [2025 Freedom of Expression Prize](#) jointly to South Sudanese novelist Stella Gaitano and Sudanese poet and activist Emi Mahmoud. The two writers were honored and presented with the award on Saturday, March 7, during the union's annual meeting. The Freedom of Expression Prize, established in 1993 by the Norwegian Ministry of Culture to mark the centenary of the Norwegian Writers' Union, is awarded to a Norwegian or international author who has made significant contributions to defending freedom of expression and promoting tolerance in its broadest sense.

In explaining its decision, the union's international committee highlighted the achievements of both writers. Stella Gaitano (born in 1979 in Khartoum) is an award-winning writer and activist whose work vividly portrays the psychological and physical wounds caused by civil wars in Sudan and South Sudan. She studied Arabic and English at University of Khartoum, trained as a pharmacist, and also worked as a journalist.

In 2002, Gaitano published her first short story collection, *Withered Flowers*, which explores the experiences of individuals who fled violence in South Sudan. Her work often addresses themes of war, displacement and identity. Her use of the Arabic language—viewed by some in South Sudan as “the language of the other”—has exposed her to media attacks and political harassment. Reports have also documented serious intimidation against her following statements she made about corruption and war. These pressures contributed to her relocation to Germany in 2022 through the PEN Germany Writers in Exile program.

From exile, Gaitano continues to write critically about power, responsibility and ethics, using storytelling as a tool of resistance against forgetting and encouraging the documentation of crimes and abuses.

Emi Mahmoud (born in 1993 in Sudan), whose Arabic name is Imtithal Mahmoud, is a Sudanese-American poet and human rights activist based in the United States. She was born in Darfur and fled with her family during the genocide in western Sudan. After several years as refugees in Yemen, the family was granted residency in Philadelphia. Mahmoud began writing poetry at the age of ten as a way to process the traumatic stories her mother told about their escape. While studying at Yale University, she discovered spoken-word poetry and went on to win the World Poetry Slam Championship in 2015.

In 2018, she was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, using her poetry and performances to raise awareness about the global refugee crisis and promote empathy and understanding. Mahmoud has also used her voice to highlight the war in Sudan and the suffering of civilians, while advocating for greater attention to climate governance in protracted humanitarian crises and strengthening understanding of the links between human rights and climate justice.

Her first poetry collection, *Sisters' Entrance*, was released in 2015, and she is also featured in the essay anthology *Feminists Don't Wear Pink and Other Lies* (2020). In announcing the award, the committee said: "We nominate Emi Mahmoud for this prize because she uses poetry to remind us of humanitarian crises and to shed light on the histories of countries, conflicts, and peoples."

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#### □ Further Reading

### On International Women's Day: 643 Women Detained in "Korea" Prison in Nyala Face an Uncertain Fate



Legal experts and women's rights advocates say the theme of this year's commemoration directly reflects the reality faced by Sudanese women. The ongoing armed conflict has deepened the vulnerability of women and girls and intensified various forms of violence and abuse amid fragile protection and accountability mechanisms. [Read the full story](#)

### Children Out of the Classroom: The Hidden Face of Sudanese Refugees' Suffering



When "A.A., a 35-year-old" Sudanese widow, fled her country amid the war between the Sudanese army and the Rapid Support Forces, she asked for only one thing: that her three children survive. Egypt seemed the safest place to seek refuge. Yet the safety she found in Cairo has proven incomplete. [Read the full story](#)

### Blue Nile Under Fire: A Frontline Ignites as the Humanitarian Crisis Deepens



On the outskirts of the city of Damazin, a mother sits on a worn piece of cloth, clutching two children to her chest and trying to convince them that the long journey they endured was not an escape, but merely “a short trip.” Behind her, dozens of families continue to arrive from the town of Kurmuk and nearby villages, after days of shelling and clashes that have turned farmlands into fields of fire and homes into shadows of fear. [Read the full story](#)

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